

Partnerships for Success

Government partnerships with positive outcomes for Indigenous people, businesses and communities

Dene Teacher Education Program

Ministry of Advanced Education and Ministry of Education

In the Summer of 2016, students from the communities of La Loche and Clearwater River Dene Nation began the Dene Teacher Education Program (DTEP) in pursuit of a Bachelor of Indigenous Education degree. As of October 2020, 21 students have completed the program.

The core purpose of the program was to attract and educate new university students from the La Loche area to become teachers in the Northern Lights School Division. Classes were taught at Clearwater River Dene School and included Dene linguistic and culture classes. Upon graduating, newly trained teachers are able to instruct their students in the Dene language as a part of the K-12 curriculum.

For graduates like Heather Piche, coming from the community and understanding the needs of the students, has had a profound impact on her, “The program has helped me reconnect with my traditional culture and how important it is to keep our language alive and thriving. Sharing my knowledge with students in my hometown and seeing how they enjoy learning about their culture and speaking their language is truly rewarding.”

Over time, the program is expected to improve the quality of teachers and schools leading to greater recruitment and retention of teachers in northern Saskatchewan. It’s also expected to increase student participation and graduation rates at the elementary and secondary levels, and improve transitions to post-secondary education, training and the workforce.

The program was co-ordinated and delivered by the First Nations University of Canada through a partnership between the Government of Saskatchewan, the University of Regina, Clearwater River Dene Nation and the Northern Lights School Division. The Ministry of Advanced Education and the Ministry of Education have also contributed \$120,000 over four years to cover 50 percent of the program costs.

The program demonstrates a shared commitment to advancing the Truth and Reconciliation Commission’s Call to Action 16, which calls upon post-secondary institutions to create university and college degree and diploma programs in Indigenous languages.

For more information, visit <https://www.fnuniv.ca/>

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DTEP Program Highlights

- All 21 graduates from the program have secured teaching positions.
 - 20 graduates are currently Teaching in local Saskatchewan Dene communities; and
 - One student obtained employment in British Columbia.

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Dene Teacher Education Program

In the 2016 Census, there were **9,105** people in Saskatchewan who **spoke Dene**.



7,855 people in Saskatchewan speak **Dene** as their **mother tongue**.



The majority of speakers are from the **Athabasca** and **other regions** in the **Far North** of Saskatchewan.



21 students have completed the **Dene Teacher Education Program** as of **October 2020**.

69.7% of Dene speakers live in Saskatchewan.